

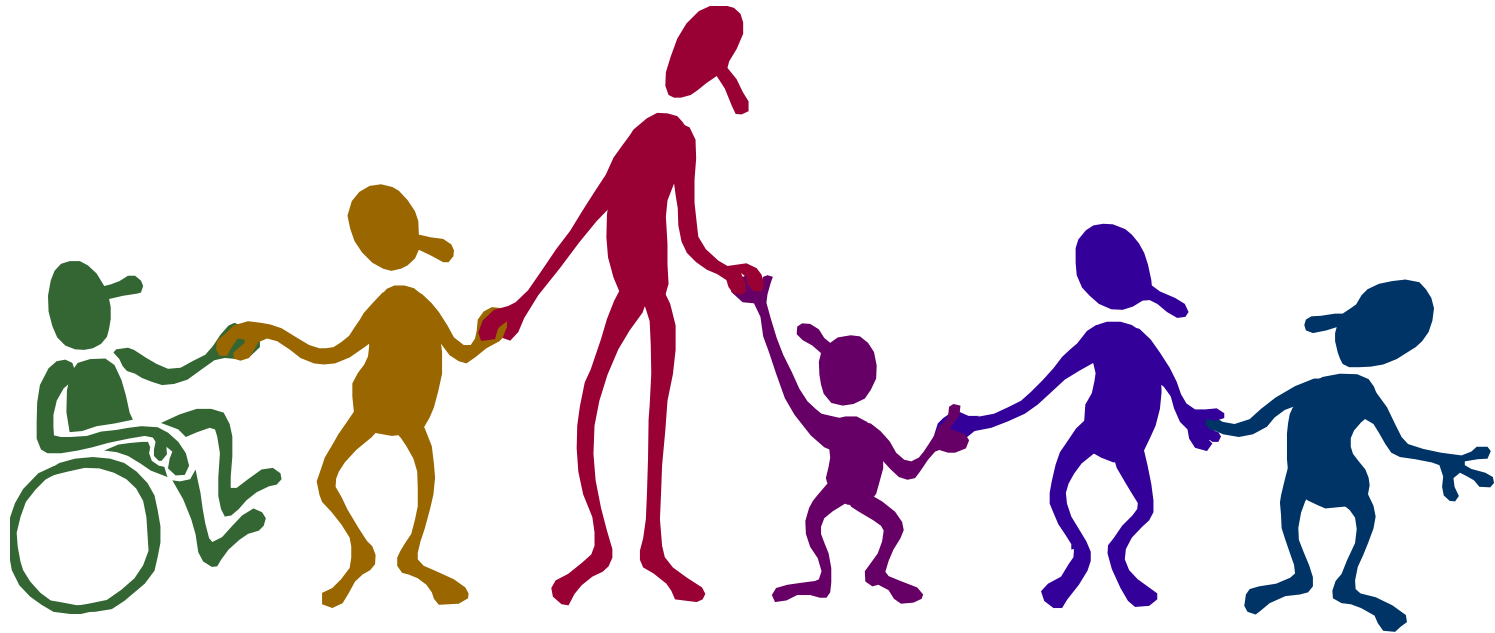


Focus Group

Conducted by

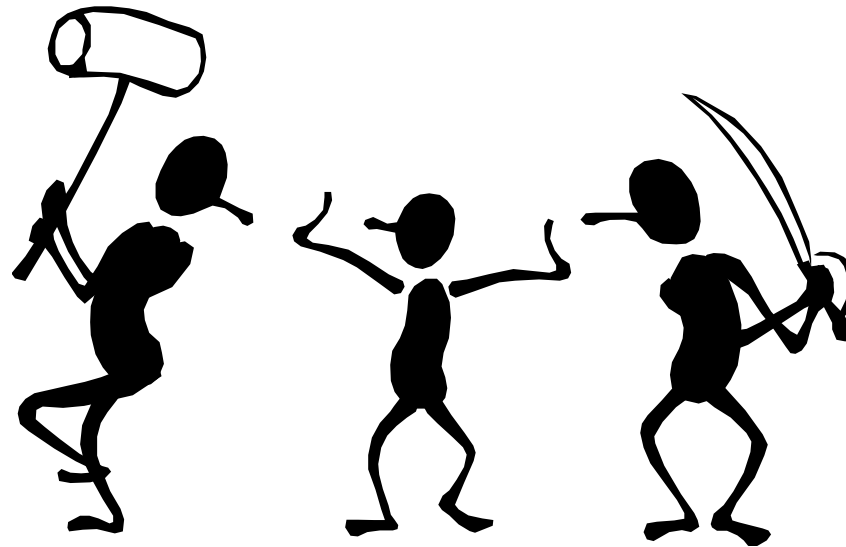
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Assessment of Programs and Services

LET'S INTRODUCE OURSELVES!



Let's Begin.

First, what are the differences between a survey, an interview, and a focus group?



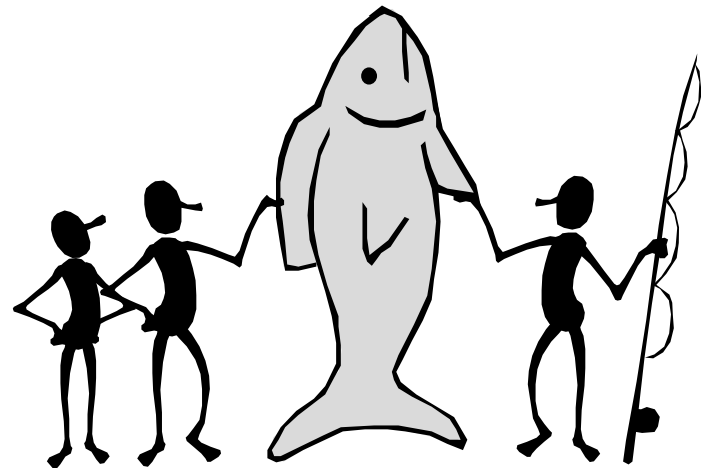
***Focus Groups:* What? Why? Who? Where? When?**



What is a focus group?

A group interview or discussion (i.e., qualitative approach) to access memories, feelings and perceptions concerning a specific focused topic.

A data collection procedure.



Reference:

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications

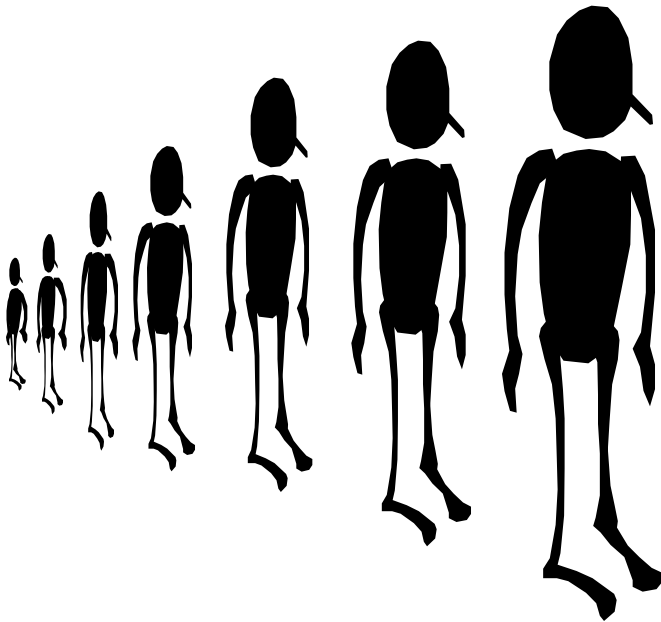
Why do focus groups?

- Generally, to collect qualitative information from a specific group of individuals for marketing, research, evaluation, or action research purposes (e.g., to produce change...to help people to make the changes they desire).
- Specifically, to listen and gather information from carefully selected participants who have certain characteristics in common so as to understand how people feel or think about an issue, product, or service.
- The intent of focus groups is to promote self-disclosure among participants. We want to know what people really think and feel.

Reference:

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications

Who should participate in a focus group?



- Approximately seven to ten people – a group small enough for everyone to have the opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions
- Participants must be similar to each other in a way that is important to the researcher (i.e., purpose of study). This similarity is the basis for recruitment and participants are informed of these common characteristics at the beginning of the discussion

Reference:

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications

Who conducts the focus group?



A trained, neutral interviewer (i.e., moderator, facilitator), who asks questions, listens, keeps the conversation on track, and makes sure everyone has a chance to share their memories, experiences, feelings and perceptions.

Where should you conduct a focus group?

Remember, we want participants to self-disclose. Thus, we want to conduct the focus group in a comfortable, permissive, non-threatening environment (e.g., someone's home, church basement, community center, pizza parlor, coffee shop, outside under a tree or in a flower garden, and so forth).



Reference:

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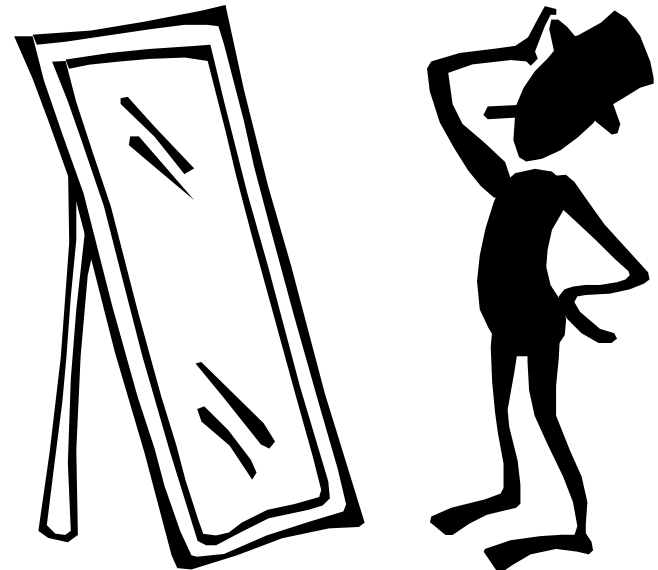
When should one conduct a focus group?

Before, during, or after a program or event.

- **Before** = Needs Assessment, asset analysis, a climate survey, planning, and pilot testing
- **During** = Formative evaluation, feedback, monitoring, reporting, process evaluation
- **After** = Summative evaluation, outcome evaluation or just feedback

Reference:

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications

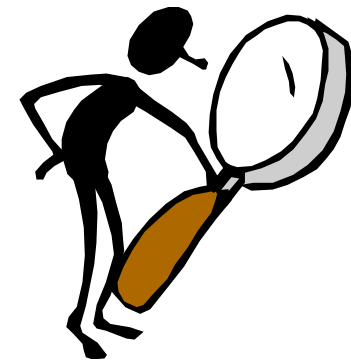
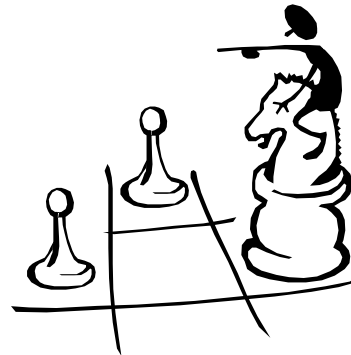


Multiple uses of information collected by focus groups?

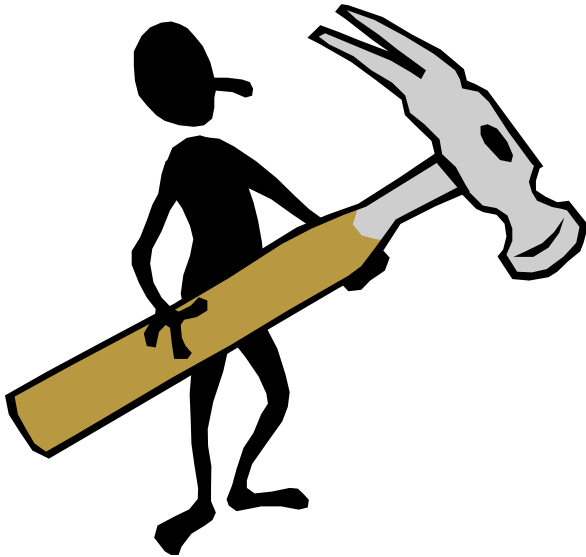
- Decision making
- Product or program development
- Customer satisfaction
- Planning and goal setting
- Needs assessment
- Quality movements toward improvements
- Organizational learning (empower people through dialogue and collective inquiry)
- Understanding employee concerns
- Policy making and testing
- A research tool

Reference:

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications



How do you conduct a focus group?



- The purpose drives the study
- Identify information-rich participants
- Use a trained, neutral interviewer (i.e., moderator, facilitator), who asks questions, listens, keeps the conversation on track, and makes sure everyone has a chance to share their experiences, memories, feelings and perceptions.
- Three focus groups are considered to be the minimum for a quality study.

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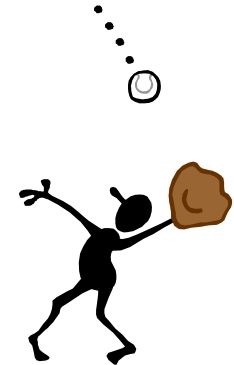
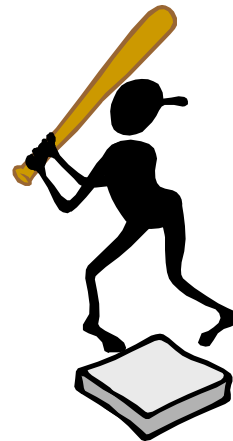
Selecting Participants

- What type of people would give you the information you want?
- Who are the target audiences?
- What characteristics should the participants have?
- Identify information-rich people (i.e., “those individuals from whom one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, p. 169, 1990))
- Determine how many focus groups to conduct – seek ***saturation***.

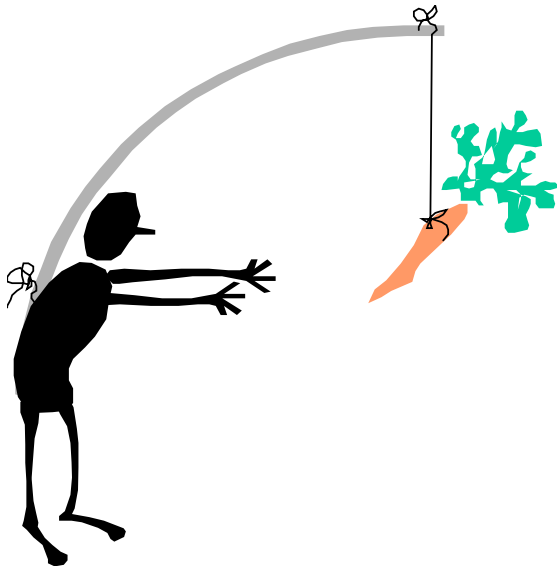
Reference:

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Sage Publications



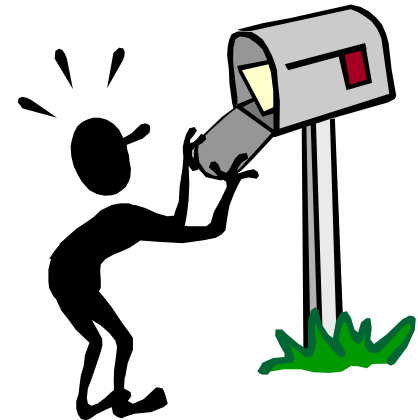
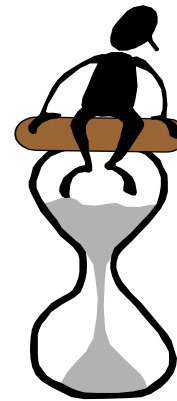
Incentives for Participants



- ✓ *Money*
- ✓ *Pizza*
- ✓ *Tickets...*
- ✓ *Positive, upbeat invitation to make a contribution, a difference*
- ✓ *Coupons*

Systematic Notification Procedures

1. **Timing...set meeting times for interviews**
2. **Contact potential participants by phone or in person (2 weeks before meeting time)**
3. **Send a personalized invitation**
4. **Phone (or contact) each person the day before the focus group**



Moderator Skills

(See Notes)



Beginning the Focus Group

- ✓ The first few moments in focus group discussion are critical.
 - Create a thoughtful, permissive atmosphere
 - Provide the ground rules
 - Set the tone
- ✓ Recommended introduction pattern:
 - Welcome
 - Overview and topic
 - Ground rules
 - First question



(See Notes)

Asking Questions That Yield Powerful Information



Quick, let's look at the notes (handout) again.

Ending Questions

- **All things considered question**
Ask participants to reflect on the entire discussion and then to offer their positions or opinions or to tell what they think is the most important part of the discussion.
- **Summary question**
After a brief oral summary, ask participants, "Is this an adequate summary?"
- **Final question**
"Have we missed anything?"

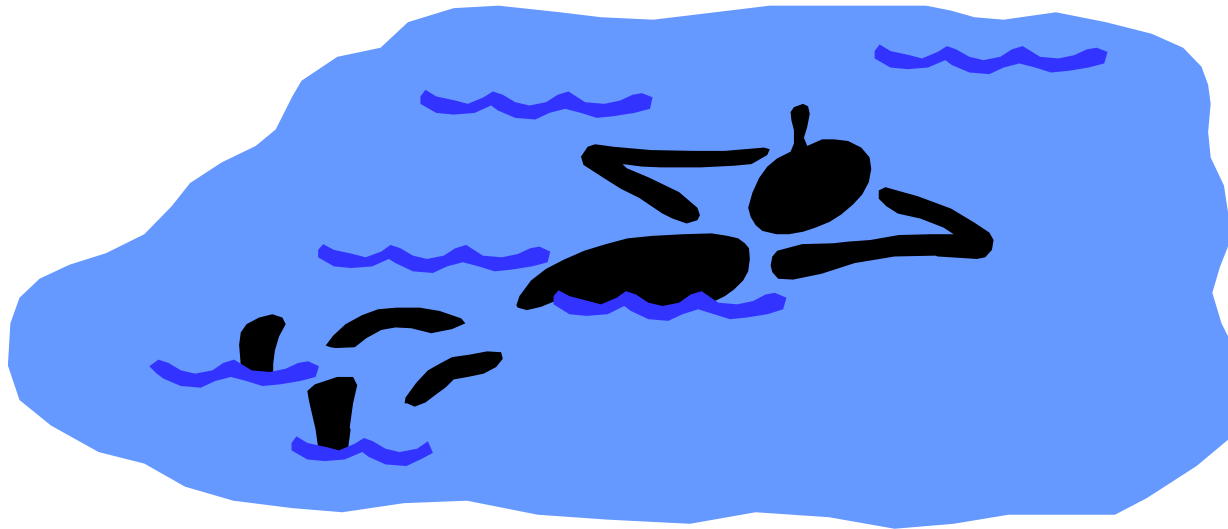


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Systematic Analysis Process

(See notes)



Focus Group Analysis Considerations

(See Notes)



Reporting Focus Group Results

(See Notes)

